

REMARKS

Applicant has carefully reviewed the Office Action mailed May 21, 2003. By this Amendment, claims 6 and 7 are amended. Claims 1 - 26 are pending in this application. It is noted that Applicant has amended the above-identified claims solely to advance prosecution of the instant application and to obtain allowance on allowable claims at the earliest possible date. Accordingly, no admission may be inferred from the amendments of claims herein. Applicant expressly reserves the right to pursue the originally filed claims in the future.

In the office action, claim 7 was objected to because it included the phrase "claim 6 when dependent upon claim 3 or any claim dependent thereon". The examiner noted that there was an inconsistency in this phrase because claim 6 depended solely upon claim 1. With this response, Applicant has amended claim 6 to remove this inconsistency.

Claim 5 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph as being based on a disclosure which was not enabling. The Examiner noted that the specification explains a sensor that detects items in the passage (8), not a current flow sensor, as recited in claim 5. Applicant submits that the detector referred to in claim 5 is not the detector for detecting the passage of items through the passage. Rather, the detector referred to in claim 5 is that described from line 6 on page 21 of the present application. There it is indicated that the detector detects the current flow through the heater elements to confirm that the heat sealing has taken place before access to the package is permitted. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully submits that claim 5 is supported by page 21, lines 6-8 of the specification.

Claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. The Examiner concluded that the phrase "in particular" rendered the claim indefinite because it was unclear whether the

limitations following that phrase were part of the claimed invention. With this response, Applicant has amended claim 6, removing the language identified by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 6 is now in condition for allowance.

Claims 1, 2, and 8-26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lewis in view of Halic.

Halic teaches a unit for validating and storing bills within a slot machine. The bills are inserted through an opening in the slot machine, and pass through a validator before being stacked in a bill stacker. The slot machine includes a main first door on to which the bill stacker is mounted. The door includes a second door through which access to the bill stacker can be obtained, and through which the bill stacker can be removed. In use, a service engineer is able to open the first door to access the interior of the slot machine for servicing. This includes access to the validator, but does not include access for removal of the bill stacker. "When a person authorized to remove the bill stacker from the machine is required to do so, he will open the second door 10 by unlocking the lock 11." (Column 2, Lines 64-66).

The validator 1 and the bill stacker 2 are arranged such that the upper surface of the bill stacker 2 is pressed against the bottom of the validator 1. (Column 3, Lines 12-13). "[A]fter being validated [bills] are pressed down through a slot in the top of the stacker 2 for storage therein." (Column 2, Lines 26-27). Applicant has carefully reviewed the Halic disclosure and can find no disclosure that bill stacker 2 is sealed in a tamper evident manner. In fact, Halic fails to teach that the slot in the top of the bill stacker 2 is sealed in any manner.

Lewis discloses [a] pneumatic packaging apparatus. "[A]n important objective of the [Lewis] invention is to provide pneumatic packaging apparatus for loading material to be

packaged into an associated container open at only one end." (Column 1, lines 20-24). At column 6, lines 38-39, Lewis teaches that "the filled bag 80 is removed from nozzle 50 for sealing or further processing." This single phrase appears to be the only reference to sealing in the Lewis disclosure. Lewis does not, therefore, teach that bag 80 is sealed in a tamper evident manner.

Unlike either Halic or Lewis, Applicant's invention as recited in claim 1, comprises a security unit that is arranged so that an inlet of a removable package is sealed in a tamper evident manner before the removable package can be removed from the housing. Because the package is sealed in a tamper evident manner, the bank receiving the package can see that the package has not been tampered with and therefore the bank will accept the contents as stated. This means it is not necessary for the bank to open the package and count and validate the contents. This tamper evident feature is not disclosed in either of the prior art references cited in this rejection.

Also unlike either Halic or Lewis, Applicant's invention as recited in claim 1, includes a removable package having a gas outlet through which gas entering the removable package can escape. In fact, Lewis teaches away from such a feature. More particularly, Lewis teaches, "it is an important object of the present invention to provide pneumatic packaging apparatus for loading material to be packaged in an associated container open only at one end" (Column 1, Lines 20-23). Rather than providing a removable package having a gas outlet, Lewis teaches that a "space between the container and the conduit accommodates the free flow of the air stream from the container." (Column 1, Lines 37-39). In figures 3 and 4 of Lewis, the gas exiting the upper end 82 of bag 80 is illustrated using a plurality of arrows.

Because neither Halic nor Lewis disclose a removable package having a gas outlet through which gas entering the package can escape, these references do not disclose all elements of applicant's claimed invention. This difference would not have been obvious to the ordinarily skilled artisan because Lewis teaches away from a package having a gas outlet.

Additionally, the fact that neither Halic nor Lewis disclosed a security unit arranged so that the inlet of a removable package is sealed in a tamper evident manner before the package can be removed from the security unit shows that these references do not disclose all elements of Applicant's claimed invention. The fact that Applicant's claimed invention eliminates any need to validate the contents of the package indicates that this invention is an improvement over the prior art that would not have been obvious to the ordinarily skilled artisan.

For the reasons discussed above, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 1 is now in condition for allowance. Claims 2 - 26 depend from claim 1 and recite additional limitations; Applicant respectfully submits that these claims are also in condition for allowance.

With regard to claim 6, the Examiner took official notice that the use of time-delay locks in cash storage and transfer mechanisms is known in the art. In accordance with MPEP 2144.03, Applicant hereby traverses the Examiner's taking of official notice. If the present rejection is maintained, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner provide a reference teaching the use of time-delay locks in a cash storage and transfer mechanism.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance of the application are respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned if the Examiner believes it would be useful to advance prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,



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